

# KCCTO-KITS

Infant-Toddler Specialist Network (ITSN)



## Parent Handbook Guidance



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A parent handbook helps parents to understand the child care service you provide and guides expectations for both you and the parent. Some policies and procedures are developed as requirements of child care regulations and some may be developed that are unique to your program. A parent handbook is written to describe your program, philosophy, policies, and all the practical details that go into operating a high-quality program. Your parent handbook should outline clear and consistent policies and procedures to ensure families are aware of the expectations.

#### THINGS YOU MAY WANT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PARENT HANDBOOK:

- Philosophy
- Communication
- Child's Records
- Mandated Reporter
- Supervision
- Discipline Policy
- Hours and Vacation Time
- Fees & Payment
- Termination
- Authorized Pick-up and Drop-off
- Transportation
- Emergency and Unusual Occurrences Procedures
- Illness and Medication Administration
- Supplies and Personal Belongings
- Activity/Curriculum
- Schedule
- Meals
- Nap/Rest Time
- Holiday, Birthday and Celebrations
- Dress Code
- Changes to Policies

## Parent Handbook Considerations

### PHILOSOPHY

- How will you incorporate Developmentally Appropriate Practices into your program?
  - For more information on DAP, visit <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/developmentally-appropriate-practice>
- What are your beliefs around diversity and inclusion of children with disabilities?
- What is your role as a child care provider? What is the child's role as a learner?
- What partnership roles do parents and provider play?
- What (if any) type of curriculum do you plan to use?

### COMMUNICATION

- How will you build, maintain, and nurture relationships with parents?
- What is your preferred method of communication during the day and/or at night?
- Will you have an open door policy where parents can stop by at any time?

### CHILD RECORDS

- How will you ensure child records are up to date with information required per KDHE regulation?
- What other documentation will you require from families?

### MANDATED REPORTER

- As a child care provider, you are a mandated reporter. How will you explain to parents what that means, what you are required to do, and who you report to.

### SUPERVISION

- How will you ensure supervision of children during indoor play, outdoor play, transitions, mealtimes, nap time, bathroom breaks, etc.?

### DISCIPLINE POLICY

- Review DCF Policy Statement on Discipline (pg. 35). <http://content.dcf.ks.gov/ees/KEESM/Appendix/ES1655Final.pdf>
  - Emphasize that no harsh, humiliating, or frightening verbal discipline or physical punishment in any form will be used with any child, even at the request of parents.
- How will you respond to challenging behaviors?
  - What positive guidance strategies will you use?
  - How does the age or developmental level of the child impact your response?

### HOURS & VACATION TIME

- Do you provide part time, full time, night & weekend or extended care?
- What is your policy for holidays?
- Do you build your vacation time into the contract each year?
  - How do you notify parents of this time?
  - Do you arrange backup care or are parents responsible in doing so?
  - Do parents get a reduction in fees during this time?
- How will you handle extended absences for vacation?
  - Do parents have to provide notice?
  - Do parents get a reduction in fees?

### FEES AND PAYMENT

- Will you have different rates for part-time, full-time, night and weekend, or extended care?
  - Will you base your rates on the age of the child?
  - Will you provide discounts to families with multiple children enrolled?
- What is your preferred method of payment? What other methods of payment will you accept?
- When are payments due? Are payments due before care is provided?
- How will you handle late payments? How much will you charge for a late fee?
- What rate will you charge for extended leaves (e.g., over the summer while a teacher is off, keeping a child home while on maternity leave, extended vacations, etc.)?

## TERMINATION

- Are parents required to give a two week notice? Does it need to be written or can it be verbal?
- What circumstances could lead you to suspend or terminate a child (e.g., nonpayment, concern for child safety, etc.)?
- Consider reviewing the following resources for information:
  - DCF Provider Handbook (2018) Sample Contract 2 (pg. 32) <http://content.dcf.ks.gov/ees/KEESM/Appendix/ES1655Final.pdf>
  - Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs <https://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/2.2.0.8>
  - Standing Together Against Suspension and Expulsion in Early Childhood <https://www.naeyc.org/standing-together-against-suspension-expulsion-early-childhood-resources>

## AUTHORIZED PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF

- How will you communicate with families that children can only be released to persons approved on the pick up list with an ID?
- How will you handle legal or custodial issues?
- What will you do if an unauthorized person tries to pick up a child?
- What will you do if an authorized person arrives to pick up and appears to be intoxicated or disoriented?
- How will you handle late pickup?
  - Will you charge a late fee? If so, how much will you charge and when is it due?

## TRANSPORTATION

- Do you provide transportation?
- Do you transport children to or from school or activities?
- Do you provide the car seat or do the parents?

## EMERGENCY OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES PROCEDURES

- What are your emergency plans as required for KDHE for flood, fire, tornado, supervision, bomb threat, hazardous materials, etc.?
  - Where will your emergency meet-up place be?
  - How will you inform parents of emergencies?
- How will you inform parents of an unusual occurrence involving their child?

- What will you do if a child needs to go to the ER?
  - Will you ride in the ambulance?
  - Will you take the child in your vehicle?
  - How will you maintain supervision for other children in your care?

## ILLNESS & MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

- What are your criteria for excluding a child for care as it relates to fever, vomiting & diarrhea, rash of unknown origin, failure to participate, contagious illness or lice.
- If a child becomes ill, how long does the parent have to come pick them up?
- Will you administer medication prescribed by a doctor?
- Will you administer over the counter medication given to you by parents?
- Does the child have to be on medication for a certain period of time before they are allowed back into care?
- Do you have an isolation area?

## SUPPLIES & PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- What does each child need for the day (e.g., clothes, diapers, nap blanket, etc.)?
- How will you handle soiled clothing?
- Will you require parents to clearly mark belongings with the child's name?
- Will each child have a defined and separate space for their personal items?
- Will you allow toys from home? If so, are there any toys not allowed (e.g., weapons, breakables, choking hazards)?

## ACTIVITY/CURRICULUM

- What is your philosophy of how infants and young children learn?
- How will you describe the importance of play in developing skills of investigation, friendship, and self-regulation?
- How will you make parents aware of your daily schedule of routines and activities?
- How and when will you observe, assess, and plan for the participation and progress of individual children?



## SCHEDULE

- What will a typical day in your care look like for a child?
- How will you educate parents that a daily schedule should be predictable, yet flexible?
- How will you help children learn the schedule and move from one activity to another?

## MEALS

- Will you provide formula or baby food?
  - If parents bring their own will they receive a reduction in fees?
- Will you use the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)? How will you educate parents about the program?
- How will you honor special diet restrictions?
- How will you handle allergies?
  - Will you require a doctor's note?
  - Where will you display known allergies so all staff are aware of them?

## NAP/REST TIME

- Can children bring their own items to use at nap time?
- How will you communicate KDHE regulations around nap time?
- How will you share safe sleep guidance with parents of infants?
- How will you educate parents that children are not required to sleep but encouraged to rest their bodies?

## HOLIDAYS, BIRTHDAYS & CELEBRATIONS

- What holidays will your program observe?
  - How will holidays be observed?

- How will you work with families that do not observe holidays or do not want their child to be part of certain celebrations?
- How will you handle outside-of-child care party invitations?
- Can parents bring in outside food or drink for celebrations?
  - What time of the day will celebrations occur?
  - How far in advance do you want parents to communicate?
  - Do food items need to be pre-packaged or can they be homemade?
  - What kinds of food are appropriate? How will you communicate about choking hazards, high sugar, and food allergies?

## DRESS CODE

- Will you have a dress code?
- Can children wear open-toed shoes? Flip-Flops?
- Are shoes worn indoors?
- Do infants have to wear shoes?

## CHANGES TO POLICIES

- How often will you review or update your policies?
- How will you communicate policy changes to parents?
- How will you document that parents were made aware of policy changes?

Contact the KCCTO office for more information.

**We are here to support you!**

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